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CSMG helps Crosby prepare for draft

By Kevin Chlum - Staff Writer

MAPLE PARK - Last summer, Kaneland pitcher Casey Crosby burst onto the national scene with strong performances at various showcase events, causing major league scouts to flock to Maple Park each time Crosby pitched.

Wanting to avoid the distraction of the MLB personnel, Crosby and his family enlisted the help of CSMG, a sports management company based out of Chicago.

Scott Pucino, CSMG's executive vice president for baseball, and former major leaguer Bobby Witt serve as Crosby's advisers, acting as a liaison between Crosby and MLB personnel.

"I don't know how somebody could not have an adviser if they are getting highly scouted like me because it's a big hassle talking to 30 teams almost every day," said Crosby, who leaves on Monday for a pre-draft workout with the Boston Red Sox. "It's great having advisers."

After Crosby began to attract the attention of national scouting directors and became a top-notch prospect, sports marketing agencies also flocked to Maple Park in an attempt to represent Crosby.

"They contacted me in the fall, about 10 agencies called me," Crosby said. "Some came to my house and gave their business speech about why they should represent me. I choose CSMG because I felt so comfortable with them. They're at every game. Part of the reason I picked them was because they are so close. I know I will have that relationship with them for a while."

CSMG was drawn to Crosby because the company hopes to add to its already prestigious list of athletes and coaches in baseball, basketball and football.

The company's list of baseball clients include Chicago Cubs manager Lou Piniella, Arizona Diamondbacks pitcher Randy Johnson, Cleveland Indians catcher Victor Martinez and Seattle Mariners pitcher Felix Hernandez.

"As far as advising him for this year, we look around the country and the draft and we want to get the top players in the country," Witt said. "Without a doubt, he is one of the top players. We feel very fortunate to work with him and his family at this point."

Witt said he is confident Crosby will eventually play in the major leagues because of his size, athleticism and upside.



DeKalb's Becca Ford (1) chases after the ball in a game this season. After scoring a school-record 35 goals to help the Barbs to a 14-10-1 record, Ford was named All-State by the Chicago Tribune and the Illinois High School Soccer Coaches Association. Chronicle file photo

Crosby boasts a fastball that consistently clocks in the upper 80s and low 90s, along with a slider, curveball and change-up. He finished with a 6-2 record and two saves this season. Crosby allowed eight earned runs on 26 hits in 63 2/3 innings. He struck out 92 hitters while walking 38.

“He is a 6-5 left-hander who is very athletic and has great velocity,” Witt said. “His projectability is off the charts. This guy is a big leaguer. Someone like this doesn't come around every day. (MLB personnel) look at what he is capable of doing and what he's done so far. Without a doubt, it puts him above a lot of other guys out there right now.”

Witt pitched for seven teams in his major league career, including the 2001 World Series champion Arizona Diamondbacks.

He was drafted with the third overall pick in the 1985 draft and made his major league debut on April 10, 1986 with the Texas Rangers. Witt finished his career with a 142-157 record and a 4.83 ERA.

Kevin Chlum can be reached at kchlum@daily-chronicle.com.